

WHAT INTENSE COLD MEANS IN HOMES OF THE POOR.

Stories of Misery that Was Intensified by the Lowest Temperature in Thirty Years.

While those wards of the nation, the Indians, stalk about their reservations clad in double-ply blankets, there are in the city of New York hundreds of families to whom the word blanket is only a name. With the advent of the Winter season these very poor persons of the metropolis supply themselves with a cheap comforter, two or more thin sheets, numberless rags and strips of carpeting. With the advent of bright days they dispose of those covers. Linen sheets may be turned into a sack of flour, or a well-worn comforter into a quart of potatoes. They pay rent instead of buying coal when the temperature is less bitter than the possibility of eviction, and when the mercury descends suddenly, as it did on Sunday, after a season of comparatively warm weather and after almost all the time for Winter weather has gone by, it causes such suffering in the tenements as only those who live there can tell the tale of. They are in most instances absolutely unprepared in fuel, food or clothing, and without means to secure them.

Yesterday noon, when two large Journal delivery wagons laden with blankets to be distributed among the deserving poor started on their rounds, almost the first case of absolute destitution which was brought to the notice of the person having charge of the distribution was John Keenan and his wife Agnes, who exist at No. 523 West Twenty-seventh street. A sadder case of want and suffering would be hard to find. The family has two small rooms on the top floor of this miserable tenement house. Mrs. Keenan is thirty-two years old, the mother of three children—the eldest but six years old. The mother is dying of consumption. Yesterday she was lying upon a pallet protected from the cold only by a piece of carpet. There was no fire in the room, and in the front chamber was her husband, an intelligent and sober man whose broken leg was supported by the one wooden chair the room possessed. Huddled about him were the three children, clothed only in calico gowns. Keenan's right leg was broken November 9 of last year, and he has been unable since then to do any work, while the wife is too ill to leave her bed. Until six weeks ago relatives aided this stricken family, but the resources of those relatives gave out, and since then the family's condition has been pitiable. The only articles which could be dignified by the name of bedding were sold during the recent mild weather, and yesterday found them not only destitute of fuel and proper covering for their bodies, but owing \$15 to the landlord, J. H. Wilcox, of the Pulitzer building. They had received but a few moments before notice that if they could not pay this money they would be compelled to seek other quarters on Saturday.

A Drama of Suffering.

Across the street, at No. 630, were found Owen McCabe and his wife Catherine. Owen McCabe has worked in New York City as a laborer for nearly half a century, and is now seventy-four years old. He was stricken with paralysis a year ago, and has been absolutely helpless. His wife is seventy-five years old, and is totally blind. They have one grandchild, who works in a near by grocery and earns \$3 a week. The father of this boy was the sole support of Owen and his wife until he became insane, some six months ago, and is now confined at the Blackwell's Island Hospital. There was no bedding in the room yesterday, and the old man, with tears running down his cheeks, said that he had sold the two comforters they had saved from last Winter during the temperate weather two weeks ago. Two pairs of warm blankets brought benedictions upon the donors from this aged couple.

A Little Hero's Sacrifice.

At No. 62 Leroy street, second floor back, in two small and barren rooms, lives a widow, Mrs. Gorman, who is the mother of three children, the eldest—Tommy—five years old next month. Charlie is three years old, and Willie, the baby, is not yet fifteen months. Yesterday noon the mother left the house in a last desperate effort to secure employment, and as she went away she said to Tommy, "Look after the little ones while I am gone." At 4 o'clock Tommy, who had gone out into the streets and gathered a few pieces of wood, and had brought them back and built a fire within the stove, was found crouched in a chair near this ungenerous fire, and his two younger brothers clasped in his arms. About the baby was wrapped the ragged coat of this little hero, while Charlie was galling such warmth within a torn piece of comforter three feet long and of half that width. The three children were wrapped in two pairs of warm blankets, and another pair of blankets was left for the widowed mother.

There were many such scenes presented on that side of the town. In fact, Leroy, West Houston, West Twenty-seventh, West Seventeenth, West Thirty-eighth, West Sixty-fourth, and kindred streets were alive with them, and suffering was found to exist on the extreme East Side.

Cold Adds to Other Misery.

In the basement of No. 343 East Sixty-fifth street lived Mrs. Rachel Broockers. Her husband, dying of consumption, was covered by only one poor comforter. The wife, upon whom he is dependent for support, had earned eighty-five cents last Friday.

day at a day's washing, and on Saturday had sold two linen sheets and her dying husband's black coat in order to buy food. There was no fire in the room, and the poor consumptive, with his scant covering, was blue and pinched from the cold.

In that notorious section of the town known as "Battle Row," but which properly speaking is the long line of tenement houses stretching from First avenue to Avenue A, on Sixty-third street, there was intense suffering because of the weather. At No. 404 East Sixty-third street was Ellen Brosen, who lives on the third floor, and who had as the bed covering for herself and her seven children one comforter, three sheets and a pile of rags. On the floor above is Mrs. Hyman Kanes, who had even less protection for herself and her five children. At No. 410 was Maggie Keefe and her baby, gaining warmth entirely from coke which a neighbor had picked for her during the day.

At No. 429 there lives Simon Husrek, the father of three children, two of whom now lie ill with diphtheria, the youngest one having preceded them to the grave last Thursday. The little ones lay upon their couches covered only with the ragged skirts which had belonged to their dead mother.

Went to Bed for Warmth.

Two floors below was Albert Green and his three children. Green is an Englishman whose wife has been in the Cancer Hospital for three months, and whose fate the physicians will know to-day. Green is an intelligent man and sober, his neighbors say, but he has been unable to obtain work for seven weeks, and so his little ones gained what comfort they could from huddling together in a narrow trundle bed. On the top floor was Barbara Havaraneck, a widow, with five children, and two comforters to divide among the six.

A policeman—a large, sturdy fellow, with red cheeks and blue eyes—directed the delivery wagons to a ramshackle little building on East Sixtieth street, and leading the way to the top floor, the men carrying blankets, came upon the miserable family of Katie Hussey. She is twenty years old, the mother of three children, the youngest of whom is three months old. Her husband has just completed serving three of a six months' sentence for beating his wife. As the big policeman tucked the baby away in the folds of a warm blanket, he turned to the mother and said simply: "You have much to be thankful for, madame, that you have left to you a little one to tuck away." He dropped a coin into the mother's hand and closed the door with a slam, as if he had done something mean.

Cold in the Ballin Home.

On the third floor back of No. 233 Monroe street Julius Ballin lives with his wife and four children, ranging in age from seven to three years. Ballin is a man about thirty-seven years old, and in good times, when work is plentiful in his line, he earns \$15 to \$20 a week. He is a furrier, but for five months past has been unable to get a day's work.

The three rooms they occupy are uncarpeted, but the walls are generously adorned with cheap prints in plain wooden frames. When Mrs. Ballin awoke yesterday morning there was no coal with which to make a fire. She had a little wood which had been gathered in the streets the day before, but that was all. There had been no warmth in the rooms for almost a week. Breakfast was to be dry bread, and stale bread at that. The grocer on the ground floor next door had sent up a two-cent loaf the evening before, and half of it remained.

Ballin and his wife saw the last of their wood rapidly turning into ashes, when David Ballin, a small, who keeps a tiny coal cellar near by, entered the cheerless room with half a bushel of coal. David is poor himself, but he knew that his cousins were freezing, and he gave out of his small store.

When a Journal reporter visited the Ballins yesterday afternoon, the entire family was about the old-fashioned cooking stove. Julius is proud and keeps aloof from the charitable societies. He is an intelligent man, and his pale face was pinched. It was evident that he had been insufficiently fed for some time.

"For five weeks," he said, "we have lived on bread and tea. To-day we have barley for dinner because the grocer has extended our credit for a few cents. Everything of any value whatever has gone to the pawnshop, and we have been getting our bread, tea and coal on credit. Yesterday we had nothing to eat at all, until last night, when I got a two-cent loaf of bread. I pay \$8.50 a month for the rent of these rooms, and by pawning our last things I managed to pay the January rent, but still owe for this month. What we will do if this weather keeps up I haven't the slightest idea."

Hail Fed, if Warm.

Mr. Ballin was given a little money.

A little beyond Ballin's poor home, Barnett Goldsmith lives, at No. 230

Monroe street. Here, too, the family

was clustered about the kitchen stove.

Fortunately they had recently received

half a ton of coal from the Hebrew Char-

ities Society, but, while they had warmth,

Goldsmith, like nearly all the heads of

families in this locality, who are battling

with penury, betrays in his face and

voice the lack of adequate food. These

fathers see that their little ones and wives

are fed first and if anything is left they

take it.

The floors in the two rooms occupied

by Goldsmith, his wife, and four chil-

dren, are bare, and the children, the eldest of whom is six years and a half old, were in their bare feet yesterday afternoon. Their shoes were worn out weeks ago, and the \$4 that the United Hebrew

spoke of gave me six cents, and I bought coal with it. Our breakfast of tea and stale bread came from neighbors. It was kept over from Sunday, when our food came from the same source. My rent is \$5

a month, and I am now two months in arrears, or will be on February 23. I am a carriage worker, but am anxious to do anything to earn a living."

All the while Wade was carrying in his

Mrs. Heffen, is an invalid whom mysterious gifts saved from freezing.



Dying of consumption, but her only covering was a rag of carpet.

Homes Where the Coal Was Out When the Mercury Was Below Zero.

The sudden decline in temperature between Saturday night and Monday

morning found many persons unprepared for Winter weather, and though

there were many charitable persons, all the distress was not relieved. Blank-

ets were given to many families who had never known such luxuries, and

replaced in some homes comforters the head of the family had been forced

to sell in mild weather to pay rent.

A Distribution of Blankets in the Tenements Where Zero Weather Brought Great Suffering.

arms his baby, wrapped in an old piece of old shawl, and its feet swathed in torn stockings. "My wife cannot do much outside work now, you know," he explained, "because the child is still nursing. One of us has to stay at home when the other is out, to look after the children. Do any of them go to school? Yes, but they go in rags."

Calling on the Wades was a young woman dressed in black and wearing spectacles. "I came," she said, "on hearing that this family was about to be dispossessed, and Mrs. Wade wanted to see me about the children. She did not know what was to become of them, if they were turned into the street."

Department, last week and begged for some coal," said Mrs. Kane. "but it has not come yet. We are living from hand to mouth, and once in a while some kind person assists me. Our dinner last Sunday was provided by one of the school teachers of the school where Pat and Frank go. Last night our fire went out at 1 o'clock, and we nearly froze this morning. I didn't have any money in the house, and had to go out and make a quarter before we could get a fire, so the boys had nothing warm to eat before going out."

Why Two Did Not Suffer.

On the floor above the Kanes Mrs. Bridget Heffen lives with her seventeen-



They live in the basement of a tumble-down tenement in Goerck street. The father has not worked for months, and eviction threatens them.

This young woman declined to give her name, but admitted that she was interested in mission work. Mr. Wade's fears of eviction were set at rest for the present at least, and last night the children had a warm and generous meal.

Widow Kane and Her Brood.

In a stuffy little room, the walls of which are plastered with prints and old-time photographs, some of them of clergymen, the Widow Kane and her five children were trying to keep warm. One of the three rooms on the third floor back of No. 357 Madison street, which comprise the Kane apartment is the kitchen and living room. The other two are used for sleeping purposes. Peter Kane, a boy sixteen years old, is the main support of the family. He works in a butcher's shop close by for \$3.50 a week, but two of his younger brothers, Patrick, aged thirteen, and Frank, aged ten, sell papers in the evening after they leave the Children's Aid Industrial School. Annie, the only girl, seven years old, does not go to school, because she has no clothes to wear. Arthur, the second son, had to give up the place he had as messenger in a laundry because his clothes were in tatters, and the proprietor did not want such a ragged messenger.

Peter Kane, the former head of the family, died last March. He was a rigger, and provided a fair support for those dependent upon him. As in every place visited, the floor in the Kane household was innocent of carpet or any other kind of covering for the worn and creaked planks. The little furniture there is in the rooms is rickety and unsightly. Shreds of haircloth on the sofa show what the upholstery was a long time ago. Mrs. Kane pays \$7.50 for the three rooms. Yesterday forenoon she made twenty-five cents by doing some washing for a neighbor, and with that she bought some potatoes and tea. The fire in the stove was made of coal also bought out of that quarter, and there was a small baking pan of coal still left.

"I went to Mr. Blake, of the Charities

year-old daughter, Sarah, in two rooms, the combination kitchen and living room, and one caddyhole for sleeping. Mrs. Heffen, a cheerful old lady, who has been an invalid for a long time, and she is unable to walk without assistance. All day she sits patching quilts with cheap scraps and watching for Sarah's return, for of late Sarah has been going out every day in search of work. She makes jewelry boxes, but in the last two weeks has been able to earn only \$3 working a few hours at odd times. Out of this \$3, \$1.50 was paid to the landlord, and with the balance food was purchased.

"I bought a quarter's worth of tea," said the helpless old woman, "and 50 cents to the groceryman that I owed him, and 10 cents for the insurance. I wouldn't lose the insurance on my life for anything in the world, because when I die it will be all I will have to leave Sarah. We buy two cents' worth of bread at a time, stale bread, of course, and in the last week we have had five cents' worth of bread. Two ounces of tea and a quart of potatoes last us a week. That is all we eat; meat is too expensive. Some person, I cannot find out who, sent me half a ton of coal this Winter, and did the same thing last year, and the other day a man threw a lot of wood in front of the door downstairs out of his wagon, saying it was for me, and the neighbors' children brought it up. Often we are hungry, but you see, we are not freezing, thank God."

These are but a few—a very few—of the cases which came to the notice of those having in charge the distribution of these gifts. Had the time been less limited much more good might have been accomplished.

But as it was, there was warmth, and perhaps, a ray or two of sunshine brought into many a darkened home in the neighborhood of Battle Row, Hell's Kitchen and similar districts of the city which the people of New York are wont to regard as the homes of lawlessness, rather than of suffering.

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